

Senate Bill No. 493

CHAPTER 897

An act to add Section 18925 to the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to health.

[Approved by Governor October 14, 2001. Filed
with Secretary of State October 14, 2001.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 493, Sher. Health programs.

Existing law establishes the Healthy Families Program to arrange for the provision of health, dental, and vision services to eligible children pursuant to a federal program, entitled the State Children's Health Insurance Program. Under existing law, the program is administered by the Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board.

Existing law provides for the federal medicaid program, administered by each state, California's version of which is the Medi-Cal program. The Medi-Cal program, which is administered by the State Department of Health Services, provides qualified low-income persons with health care services.

Existing federal law provides for the Food Stamp Program, under which food stamps are distributed to eligible households. Under existing state law, the State Department of Social Services administers the Food Stamp Program under which the food stamps allocated to California are distributed by each county.

This bill would require the State Department of Health Services, in conjunction with the State Department of Social Services, to implement a simplified eligibility process as part of the Food Stamp Program to expedite Medi-Cal program and Healthy Families Program enrollment for food stamp recipients who are not enrolled in those programs. The bill would require each county health department to develop a data list of family members residing in eligible food stamp households who are not enrolled in the Medi-Cal program or the Healthy Families Program. The bill would also require the county welfare department to develop a notice to inform individuals identified on the data list that they may be entitled to receive benefits under the Medi-Cal program or the Healthy Families Program, and would specify the further duties of the county in this regard. The bill would specify that counties shall include the cost of implementing the above data list and notice provisions in their annual administrative budget requests to the State Department of Health Services.

Because the bill imposes certain requirements on each county, the bill would constitute a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement, including the creation of a State Mandates Claims Fund to pay the costs of mandates that do not exceed \$1,000,000 statewide and other procedures for claims whose statewide costs exceed \$1,000,000.

This bill would provide that, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that the bill contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement for those costs shall be made pursuant to these statutory provisions.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. (a) The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(1) Approximately 1.3 million of California's over 1.8 million uninsured children are eligible for either the Medi-Cal program or the Healthy Families Program.

(2) Lack of insurance coverage for children results in reduced access to medical services, resulting in restricted access to primary and preventive care and increased reliance on emergency rooms and hospitals for treatment.

(3) At least 50 percent of uninsured children who are eligible for the Medi-Cal program or the Healthy Families Program are already enrolled in public programs with similar income eligibility guidelines, including the Food Stamp Program.

(b) It is the intent of the Legislature, therefore, to create outreach and enrollment linkages between the Medi-Cal program and the Healthy Families Program and the Food Stamp Program, to efficiently target eligible children and make the health insurance enrollment process more efficient for those in need of care.

SEC. 2. Section 18925 is added to the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

18925. (a) The State Department of Health Services, in conjunction with the State Department of Social Services, shall implement a simplified eligibility process as part of the Food Stamp Program to expedite Medi-Cal program and Healthy Families Program enrollment for Food Stamp Program recipients, including children and their eligible parents or caretaker relatives who are not enrolled in those programs.



(b) Each county welfare department shall develop a data list of family members residing in eligible food stamp households who are not enrolled in the Medi-Cal program or the Healthy Families Program.

(c) The county welfare department shall develop a notice informing individuals identified pursuant to subdivision (b) that they may be entitled to receive benefits under the Medi-Cal program or the Healthy Families Program.

(d) At the time of the food stamp household's annual recertification, the county welfare department shall send the notice specified in subdivision (c) to the individuals identified in subdivision (b). The notice shall include a request for permission to use the information in the food stamp recipient's case file to make a determination of eligibility for the Medi-Cal program and the Healthy Families Program.

(e) The notice shall be written in culturally and linguistically appropriate language and at an appropriate literacy level. The notice shall include information on the Medi-Cal program and the Healthy Families Program, and a telephone number that food stamp recipients may call for additional information.

(f) To apply for medical assistance under the Medi-Cal program, the food stamp recipient shall sign, date, and return the notice requesting that an eligibility determination be made. Upon receipt of the notice, the county welfare department shall make an eligibility determination by utilizing the information in the food stamp recipient's case file or paper application. The Medi-Cal application date shall be the date the notice is received by the county welfare department. If the food stamp case file does not include sufficient information to establish Medi-Cal program eligibility, the county welfare department shall request, either orally or in writing, additional information from the food stamp recipient.

(g) If the food stamp recipient is determined to be eligible to participate in the Medi-Cal program with a share of cost, or is determined to be ineligible for Medi-Cal, information pertinent to the food stamp recipient's eligibility for the Healthy Families Program shall be forwarded by the county welfare department to the Healthy Families Program statewide administrator for immediate processing. If there is insufficient information to establish Healthy Families Program eligibility, the administrator shall request, either orally or in writing, additional information from the food stamp recipient.

(h) Counties shall include the cost of implementing this section in their annual administrative budget requests to the State Department of Health Services.

SEC. 3. Notwithstanding Section 17610 of the Government Code, if the Commission on State Mandates determines that this act contains costs mandated by the state, reimbursement to local agencies and school



districts for those costs shall be made pursuant to Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Government Code. If the statewide cost of the claim for reimbursement does not exceed one million dollars (\$1,000,000), reimbursement shall be made from the State Mandates Claims Fund.

